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**Autoren / Authors:**

SEYYED SAEED HOSSEINIAN YOUSEFKHANI, Iranian Plateau Herpetology Research Group (IPHRG), Faculty of Science, Razi University, 6714967346 Kermanshah, Iran. E-Mail: mesalina.watsonana@gmail.com

ESKANDAR RASTEGAR POUYANI, Iranian Plateau Herpetology Research Group (IPHRG), Faculty of Science, Razi University, 6714967346 Kermanshah, Iran. Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Hakim Sabzevari University, Sabzevar, Iran

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## Severe conditions on *Eremias intermedia* (STRAUCH, 1876) and *Eremias lineolata* (NIKOLSKY, 1896) (Sauria: Lacertidae) in Sarakhs, Northeastern Iran

SEYYED SAEED HOSSEINIAN YOUSEFKHANI and ESKANDAR RASTEGAR-POUYANI,  
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### Abstract

*Eremias intermedia* and *Eremias lineolata* are two species from the genus *Eremias* that are found in the Sarakhs region (at the border of Iran and Turkmenistan) (N: 36° 19' 32.4" ; E: 61° 08' 35.4"; altitude: 330 m). That particular region has very unfavorable conditions for lizards. Aridity and Human activity (agriculture) affected on their habitat. A water channel was being constructed to carry water to the city and for this reason, machines were employed which destroyed the sand dunes.

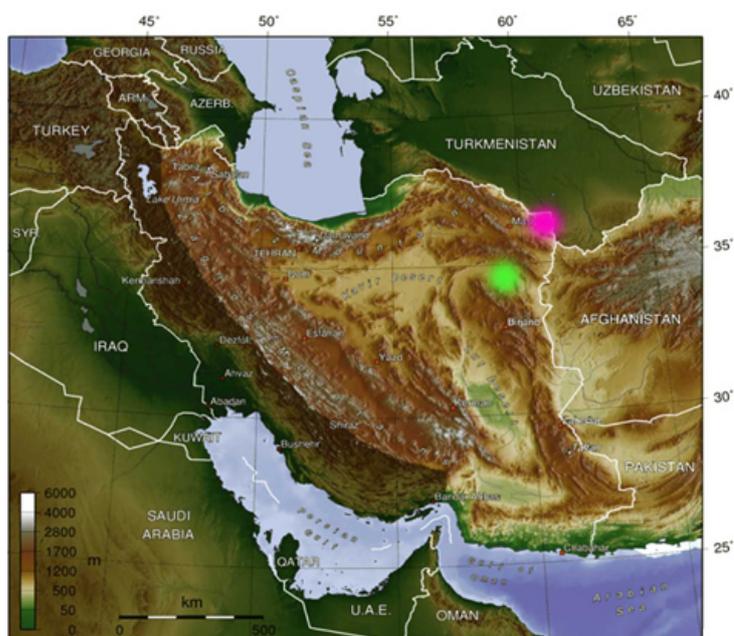
**Keywords:** *Eremias intermedia*, *Eremias lineolata*, Sarakhs, Water channel, Sand dune.

## Introduction

Genus *Eremias* FITZINGER, 1834 consists of 16 species in Iran (ANDERSON 1999; RASTEGAR-POUYANI et al. 2008; MOZAFFARI et al. 2011). The genus is one of the widespread genera in Lacertidae that is distributed from the North of China across Asia to the Southeast of Europe (RASTEGAR-POUYANI et al. 2010).

*Eremias intermedia* and *Eremias lineolata* are species that dwelling in the Central Asian Republics, and the west corner of their range enters into the Iranian plateau. The species are syntopic and are living in arid habitat like sand dunes.

The Sarakhs plain is situated in the northeast corner of Iran and related to the Turkmen desert as Transcaspica. So we decided to visit the region to survey for lizards and investigate possible problems, due to the fact this area is one of the important economical areas in Khorasan and has more industrial activities.



**Figure 1.** Map of Iran and the location of surveyed areas. Pink area is Sarakhs in which *Eremias intermedia* and *Eremias lineolata* have been seen. Green area is situated 35 km north of Gonabad, another locality of *Eremias lineolata*.



**Figure 2.** Habitat of *Eremias intermedia* and *Eremias lineolata* about 75 km to the south of Sarakhs, near Dolat Abad. (photo by Saeed Hosseinian).



**Figure 3A.** *Eremias intermedia*. (photo by Saeed Hosseinian).



**Figure 3B.** *Eremias lineolata*. (photo by Saeed Hosseinian).

## Materials and Methods

During two fieldworks in the Sarakhs area, April 2009 and September 2011, the region was investigated and some specimens were collected and recorded by GPS. One of the habitats in the region was very remarkable and photographed by the first author. The habitat that was surveyed (Figure 1) (N: 36° 19' 32.4"; E: 061° 08' 35.4"; altitude: 330 m) is comprised with sand dunes and has poor vegetation (Figure 2). All specimens were collected by hand and identified by reliable source (ANDERSON 1999; RASTEGAR-POUYANI et al. 2007). All samples were carried to Sabzevar Herpetological Collection (SUHC) and labeled in this collection. All of them have been kept in good condition.

## Results and Discussion

After 3 days in the region, we could obtain one specimen from each species (Figure 3) (SUHC 1046, 1047) and observed syntopic species as *Phrynocephalus mystaceus* and *Trapelus agilis*.

Aridity and human activity affected on the lizard habitat. The economic condition in the region, forced local people for tending to agricultural activities for export. Water channels that have been built from Doosti dam to agricultural lands, effected on the lizards habitat. *Eremias lineolata* is distributed in other parts of the Khorasan province such as Gonabad, but *Eremias intermedia* is only distributed in a very limited region and is very fragile faced to the habitat destruction effects.

We suggest that the Sarakhs Environmental Office gives this region more consideration, especially the area situated at the road between Sarakhs and Sangar, near Dolat Abad village. We hope the environmental guards will consider to this important subject about lizards.

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